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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR F.Schmelzer 7/2/85

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E.O. 12065: N/A

TAGS: IS, PBOR, US, PEPR

SUBJECT: HAIG-LEVIN LETTER

REF: 81 TEL AVIV 1464 (NOTAL)

1. IN RESPONSE TO 36 QUESTIONS ON U.S. POLICIES IN SEVERAL AREAS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR LEVIN TO THEN SECRETARY-DESIGNATE HAIG ON JANUARY 19, DEPARTMENT PREPARED ANSWERS THAT WERE DELIVERED TO SENATOR LEVIN'S OFFICE ON JANUARY 20. TEXT OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS OF MAJOR INTEREST ON MIDDLE EAST FOLLOW. NO COVERING LETTER TO SENATOR LEVIN ACCOMPANIED THE REPLIES.

2. BEGIN TEXT

Q. SAUDI ARABIA HAS REQUESTED ADDITIONAL OFFENSIVE EQUIPMENT FOR THE F-15 AIRCRAFT SUCH AS CONFORMAL FUEL PODS, MULTIPLE EJECTION BOMB RACKS, KC-135 JET TANKERS, AIM-9-L SUPER-SIDEWINDER MISSILES AND AWACS. PRESIDENT-ELECT REAGAN PLEDGED HIS ADMINISTRATION "WILL NOT CONTINUE TO SHIP MASSIVE QUANTITIES OF SOPHISTICATED ARMAMENTS TO SO-CALLED "MODERATE STATES WHO, IN FACT, MIGHT DIRECTLY THREATEN ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE."

IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT ISRAEL HAS SAID THIS OFFENSIVE ENHANCEMENT FOR THE SAUDI F-15 POSES A DIRECT THREAT TO ITS SECURITY, AND IN LIGHT OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT'S STATEMENTS, WOULD YOU SUPPORT SALE OF THE EQUIPMENT THE SAUDIS ARE SEEKING?

ANSWER: THIS IS A SERIOUS ISSUE WHICH THIS ADMINISTRATION MUST EXAMINE CAREFULLY IN THE LIGHT OF OUR OVERALL INTERESTS IN THE REGION. IT WOULD BE PREMATURE FOR ME TO SAY WHAT MY RECOMMENDATION TO THE PRESIDENT WOULD BE AT THIS TIME. BUT I WILL ASSURE YOU THAT MY RECOMMENDATION WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION OUR CONCERNS FOR SAUDI ARABIA'S SECURITY, OUR COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL'S SECURITY, AND THE REGIONAL ARMS BALANCE.

Q. IF YOU HAD BEEN SECRETARY OF STATE IN 1978, WOULD YOU HAVE PROPOSED THAT THE UNITED STATES SELL 60 HIGH PERFORMANCE, F-15 JET FIGHTERS TO SAUDI ARABIA?

ANSWER: I SUPPORT THE 1978 DECISION TO SELL 60 F-15 FIGHTERS TO SAUDI ARABIA. AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE HAD A LONG AND CORDIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH SAUDI ARABIA, AND THE F-15 SALE WAS AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT IN HELPING TO MAINTAIN IT. MORE BASICALLY, THE U.S. HAS HAD A LONG-STANDING INTEREST IN SAUDI SECURITY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND IT HAS LONG BEEN U.S. POLICY TO ASSIST SAUDI ARABIA TO DEVELOP AN ADEQUATE DEFENSE CAPABILITY. THIS SALE WAS SUPPORTIVE OF THIS LONG-STANDING U.S. INTEREST AND I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT IT ADVERSELY AFFECTED THE BALANCE OF POWER IN THE PERSIAN GULF REGION.

Q. IF YOU HAVE BEEN SECRETARY OF STATE THEN, WOULD YOU HAVE AGREED TO THE COMMITMENT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION MADE TO THE CONGRESS AT THAT TIME THAT THESE F-15S WOULD NOT LATER BE "ENHANCED" WITH OFFENSIVE CAPABILITIES SUCH AS MULTIPLE EJECTOR BOMB RACKS, CONFORMAL FUEL TANKS AND ADVANCED AIR-TO-AIR MISSILES?

ANSWER: I FULLY UNDERSTAND THE SENSIBILITIES OF THE F-15 ENHANCEMENT ISSUES AND THE BACKGROUND TO THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S DECISION AT THAT TIME. I AM NOT PREPARED TO SECOND GUESS THE PEOPLE WHO MADE THIS DECISION.

Q. WOULD YOU RECOMMEND TO PRESIDENT REAGAN, IF YOU ARE CONFIRMED AS SECRETARY OF STATE, THAT HE ALSO DISAPPROVE ANY SAUDI REQUEST FOR SALE OF THIS OFFENSIVE EQUIPMENT TO ENHANCE THE CAPABILITIES OF THEIR F-15S?

ANSWER: IT WOULD BE PREMATURE FOR ME TO SAY WHAT I WOULD RECOMMEND TO THE PRESIDENT REGARDING THE SALE OF F-15 ENHANCEMENT ITEMS TO SAUDI ARABIA. THIS IS A SERIOUS ISSUE WHICH WE WILL HAVE TO STUDY CLOSELY.

Q. DO YOU THINK THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD RECOGNIZE A UNIFIED JERUSALEM AS THE CAPITAL OF ISRAEL AND UNDER ISRAELI JURISDICTION?

ANSWER: IT HAS BEEN THE UNITED STATES POSITION FOR THREE DECADES THAT THE FINAL STATUS OF JERUSALEM MUST BE RESOLVED THROUGH THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS, AND THAT THE OUTCOME OF SUCH NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD NOT BE PREJUDGED BY UNILATERAL ACTION BY ANY PARTY. I ASSOCIATE MYSELF FULLY WITH THIS VIEW. THE UNITED STATES MUST CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO HELP BRING ABOUT A SETTLEMENT OF THE ISSUE OF JERUSALEM SATISFACTORY TO ALL THOSE DIRECTLY CONCERNED. ANY MOVE TO EXTEND FORMAL RECOGNITION BEFORE AN AGREED SETTLEMENT OF THE STATUS OF JERUSALEM HAS BEEN REACHED WOULD UNDERCUT BOTH OUR EFFORTS AND THOSE OF THE PARTIES TO BRING ABOUT SUCH A SETTLEMENT AND TO ACHIEVE A COMPREHENSIVE MIDDLE EAST PEACE. AT THE SAME TIME, I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT JERUSALEM SHOULD NEVER BE DIVIDED AGAIN BY BARBED WIRE AND ARTIFICIAL BOUNDARIES.

Q. DO YOU THINK THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NEGOTIATE WITH THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION BEFORE IT RENOUNCES TERRORISM AND THE DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL?

ANSWER: IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SEARCH FOR A JUST AND LASTING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, I DO NOT BELIEVE WE WOULD HAVE ANYTHING TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE PLO, UNLESS AND UNTIL IT ACCEPTS THE RIGHT OF ISRAEL TO EXIST AND LIVE AT PEACE WITHIN SECURE AND RECOGNIZED BOUNDARIES. SUCH AN ACCEPTANCE OF ISRAEL WOULD, OF COURSE, BE INCONSISTENT WITH TERRORIST ACTIVITIES.

Q. IF YOU HAD BEEN SECRETARY OF STATE DURING THE PAST YEAR, HOW WOULD YOU HAVE RECOMMENDED THE U.S. DELEGATION TO VOTE ON THE TWO UN VOTES DEALING WITH ISRAELI TREATMENT OF TERRITORIES IT CAPTURED IN THE JUNE 1967 WAR? THE FIRST DEALT WITH ISRAEL SETTLEMENT OF THE WEST BANK AND THE GENERAL DISPOSITION OF THAT AREA; THE SECOND UN RESOLUTION CONDEMNED ISRAEL'S MOVE AFFIRMING JERUSALEM AS ITS ETERNAL CAPITAL.

ANSWER: IF I UNDERSTAND CORRECTLY, THE RESOLUTIONS TO WHICH THE QUESTION REFERS ARE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION 465 OF MARCH 1, 1980 AND RESOLUTION 478 OF AUGUST 20, 1980. ALTHOUGH BOTH RESOLUTIONS CONTAINED ELEMENTS THAT ARE IN ACCORD WITH AMERICAN POLICY THAT HAS REMAINED CONSTANT THROUGH ADMINISTRATIONS REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC, I CONSIDER BOTH TO HAVE BEEN DEEPLY FLAWED AND UNBALANCED. I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO SAY NOW JUST WHAT I WOULD HAVE RECOMMENDED, NOT BEING FULLY AWARE OF ALL RELEVANT CIRCUMSTANCES, INCLUDING THE CLIMATE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, THE STATUS OF THE PEACE PROCESS, AND THE ENVIRONMENT AT THE UN AT THE TIME THE RESOLUTIONS WERE PRESENTED. IT IS FAIR TO SAY IN RETROSPECT, HOWEVER, THAT THE MANY UNBALANCED EFFORTS TO CONDEMN ISRAEL FOR VARIOUS OF ITS ACTIONS THIS YEAR TURNED OUT TO BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND CONTRIBUTED NOTHING TO THE SEARCH FOR PEACE. THESE EFFORTS WERE STERILE IN THE MAIN. IT WILL BE MY OBJECTIVE TO ENCOURAGE THE UN TO FIND CONSTRUCTIVE WAYS TO STIMULATE PROGRESS TOWARDS A JUST AND COMPREHENSIVE PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

3. SEVERAL ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ON U.S. STRATEGIC POSTURE IN THE PERSIAN GULF IN MORE GENERAL TERMS ARE BEING POUCHED TO EMBASSY ON JANUARY 29.

4. THE TEXT OF THE HAIG-LEVIN EXCHANGE IS PROVIDED IN THIS CABLE FOR USE BY EMBASSY, AT ITS DISCRETION, TO CORRECT POSSIBLE PRESS MISQUOTES.

HAIG